E. R. Bates

THE

DUTY OF MASTERS;

A SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

IN DANVILLE, KY.

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THE DUTIES OF MASTERS:

COLOSSIANS 4, 1; "Masters give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a master in heaven."

Several questions deeply interesting to masters who hold their servants in involuntary bondage, have been often of late, discussed with great zeal and ability, in different parts of the land. It has been questioned, 1st, 'Whether our system of servitude is right or not? 2nd. Whether it is not the duty of all men, and especially the owners of slaves, to aid energetically in bringing this system to a close? 3d. Whether every master is not bound, in the case of his own servants, to adopt such measures as will, sooner or later, secure their freedom? 4th. Whether immediate emancipation is not the duty of every master?" Every conscientious slaveholder will calmly and intelligently examine those questions, and decide upon the course he ought to pursue. But it is not our purpose on the present occasion to discuss them. My own views have been expressed upon each of them, fully and clearly in another form, and you can all readily obtain from various sources, the means of forming intelligent opinions upon them. But while much has been published on *these points*, I have met with no exhibition of the duties which masters owe to their servants while they continue to hold them in bondage. Nor is it necessary before we proceed to the examination of this subject, that we should have decided any of the previous questions, which I have stated, *except the last*. For however we might decide the other questions, we would not be precluded from inquiring what are our obligations *while we hold our* servants in involuntary bondage—but if we decide that the relation itself is always sinful, and that we are bound at once to set them free, *all further inquiry would be precluded* and our whole duty would be summed up in immediate emancipation. Our only assumption, then, in discussing the duties of masters will be that immediate emancipation is not a universal duty. Of the ten commandments, which God has given to us, as comprising his moral law, *six* are intended to regulate our intercourse with

our fellow men—and with no portion of our fellow beings, except our wives and children, have we so much to do as with our servants. Our duties to them must, then, be deeply important, embracing as they do, so large a portion of the duties contained in the most extensive branch of the divine code. Our dealings with our servants comprehend a very large part of that conduct for which we are to be responsible at the bar of God; is it not then of the utmost consequence to ourselves that these dealings should be all regulated by the principles of religion? The Bible lays down precepts for the master and for the servant, because each has the happiness and well-being of the other greatly in his power. There is, however, more need of the authority of religion to enforce the duties of the master—for while he has power to coerce the servant to yield him in some good degree, what is his due, the servant has no reciprocal power to coerce the master. The *natural* motives which can be applied to stimulate the servant's labors for his master are much more efficacious with the mass of men, than those which address themselves to the master in behalf of the servant's interests.

In examining our text and comparing it with the instructions given to servants in the previous verses, we have been struck with the discriminating and beautiful adaptation of the several precepts and motives to the respective classes to whom they are addressed. The peculiar temptation of the servant is to indolence and remissness in his work, because he lacks that greatest natural stimulus to exertion, the knowledge that he will himself enjoy exclusively the whole fruit of his labors—for as our personal interest in the results of our efforts is diminished, the spirits of all men naturally flag and their industry decreases. *The main precept to the servant meets this evil* by enjoining upon him *faithfulness* and *energy* in all that he does—"whatsoever ye do, do it heartily." And mark the peculiarity of the motive by which this precept is enforced, and it's *adaptation to counteract the force of their temptation*—"knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance." *Here* is a *reward* to quicken the sluggish spirit. The servant is taught that while he labors in his lowly avocations, he is working not merely for an earthly but for a heavenly master, and that however little compensation he may receive from his earthly master, a heavenly inheritance shall reward his faithful exertions. The master, on the other hand, is tempted continually by his possession of arbitrary and irresponsible power, to the exercise of injustice and oppression. On him therefore is enjoined, "give unto your servants that which

is just and equal." And the injunction is enforced by reminding him of the fact, that there is one who holds dominion over *him*, and who will one day call him to an account for the exercise of his power. Thus the *master* is *checked* by the *fear* of *retribution*, while the *servant* is *stimulated* by the *hope of reward*.

The precept in our text is strikingly wise too in its comprehensiveness. To see this, reflect for a moment, how long a list of directions must be given, in order to specify the particular and minute duties of any one master; reflect then upon the very varied circumstances of masters, which would more or less modify their duties;—upon the very different kinds of servitude, which have prevailed in different climes and ages,—and upon the very different conditions of society in which masters and servants are found, all of which circumstances must produce variations in these duties. A *detailed statement* of a masters duty, under all circumstances was, then, *impossible*. Nor was it necessary; for here, in a condensed form, is summed up the whole of their duties—"give unto your servants that which is just and equal"—give them what conscience, if you consult its dictates, will teach you that justice and equity, in each particular set of circumstances, demand. But will not selfishness so blind us as to prevent our clearly discerning what is "just and equal?" This danger is removed and the correct working of the rule secured, if we give due heed to the motive by which it is followed—"knowing that ye also have a master in heaven." God calls our attention to the fact that he is *our master*—as we treat our servants, we may expect that *our master* will treat us—"with whatsoever measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Can we conceive of a more efficacious means of securing a correct judgment on the rights of our servants than is furnished by the thought thus presented before us? Suppose you were placed in a condition of alternate authority and servitude—that each day of power was followed by a day of subjection, and that you learned that, on each alternate day which you spent as a servant, you were to be treated exactly as you had treated your servants on the day preceding, would it not make you impartial and just? Would you not honestly seek to ascertain your duties to your servants, and most scrupulously fulfil those duties? But, *if this supposition were realized*, your motive to diligent enquiry and conscientious conduct on this subject would *not be as powerful as it is now*. It is not your condition on alternate days of your *earthly existence*, but your condition *throughout eternity*, which is to be affected by your conduct towards your servants. After

a short mastership here on earth, you are to go up to your master in heaven, and there receive according to what you have given —the principles on which you have acted must there be applied to yourself—and how infinitely more momentous in their consequences upon us, for welfare or for wo, will be the application of those principles there! When, therefore, we fail to render to our servants the full amount of what is "just and equal," it is evidently no gain, to us but a most serious loss. If we are wise, we will not, in deciding upon what is due to our servants, lean to what might be considered our own interest, by men who look not beyond the grave in their calculations of profit and loss—nor will we be content with a slight and hasty consideration of the subject, knowing that mistakes arising from inattention or prejudice, will not excuse our derelictions in duty, nor screen us from their punishment.

Let me entreat you my beloved brethren, to make this motive practical—dwell upon it, until its influence habitually affects your conduct.—Realize to yourselves the solemn fact, that each of us has a master, and that *as we deal with our servants so will he deal with us.* Do we wish him to do for us, his imperfect and unworthy servants, more than we feel that we deserve? And shall we not do for our servants, as we beseech him to do for us? Can we expect him to forgive our debt of ten thousand talents, yet exact rigorously the hundred pence which are due from our poor fellow being to ourselves? Let us remember that it is *our master* who hath warned us that "he shall have judgment without mercy, who hath showed no mercy;" and let us determine so to treat our dependents as we ask him to treat us.

We will now endeavor to show, in some points, what this precept, "give unto your servants that which is just and equal," would require under our peculiar circumstances. The duties enjoined by this general rule must vary, as we hinted above, with the peculiar nature of the servitude. The master who owns slaves, owes them far more than is due from the master who hires free laborers to those employed to do his work, for our bondmen are in a great measure dependent upon us for their happiness in time and eternity, the laws of the land giving us the entire control over their persons, and the absolute disposal of all the proceeds of their labor. The obligations must correspond necessarily with the extent of their dependence and the absoluteness of our power.

1st. It is the duty of every master to *form the habit of feeling that his servants are partakers of the same flesh and blood, and*

brethren of the same great family with himself—and the habit of speaking and acting towards them as this view of his connexion with them would require.

One of the natural and pernicious consequences of arbitrary power is, that it begets a feeling in its possessor towards his subjects such as could only *properly exist* if he and they belonged to different species. In Europe, during the middle ages, the serfs were regarded by their lords as beings of an inferior order. The Russian noble entertains now the same feeling towards his bondsmen, though their skin is of the same color with his own. It is no difference in the skin, as we sometimes imagine, nor in the shape of the features, which produces in us this feeling of fancied superiority of nature, for the feeling rises in the minds of none but those who have seen the black man in bondage. If we would discharge our duties to our servants we must counteract and change this feeling, if we wish to act rightly we must *neither think a lie, nor even feel a lie.* We must reflect upon the facts announced to us in the Holy Scriptures, that "God has made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth," and that we are all sprung from Adam as our common ancestor. We should observe that they possess all the feelings which prove a common nature with ourselves,—the same susceptibilities of hatred and love, joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain; the same capacities of memory and judgment, reason and conscience. Still more are we to impress upon ourselves the fact that they are our brethren, when we remember that the same gracious God, whom we esteem it a privilege to call our Father, *acknowledges them equally with ourselves as his children, and exhibits for them the same affection;* that the same Savior who has redeemed us by his precious blood *recognises them as a part of his purchased inheritance,* and that they are to enjoy throughout eternity, in full concert with ourselves, the thrones and the crowns, and the harps, and the mansions which God has promised to his redeemed people. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither *bond* nor *free*—for ye are all one in Christ Jesus"

When, by such views, we free ourselves from that contemptious feeling, which their servile condition tends to generate, and form the fixed habit of regarding them as our brethren, our language in addressing them, and our conduct towards them will naturally conform to our improved sentiments.

2nd. It is our *duty to suppress and eradicate another unwarranted and pernicious* feeling that naturally *springs up in us, the feeling that our servants were made for us.*

Our cattle, our houses, and *all* our property, we regard as designed for our use—the very end and aim of the existence of these objects is for our service, for this service God created them. Now, when we class a fellow man as a part of our property, we are *exceedingly apt* to regard *him* as we are in the habit of *correctly* regarding all *the other portions* of our property, and consequently we are apt to feel that the great end of his existence, and the main use for which he was designed, is to serve us. But whatever rights the laws of the land may give us over our servants, and however much they may foster this erroneous impression, we are to remember that our servant was created for a purpose as elevated, and a destiny as glorious as our own—he was formed to *serve God Almighty and to inherit the glories of his eternal kingdom.* For this end he was endowed, equally with ourselves, with an immortal soul, and the revelation of God's will was directed to him as well as to us. We cannot degrade our servants into the mere instruments of our gratifications; we cannot conceive of them as creatures merely existing for our interests, without miserably failing in our most important duties towards them. Our servants have higher relations than those which they sustain towards us, they have more important duties than those which they owe to us, they have more valuable interests than those which we can affect. Their first and main duty is to serve that God who is their *master and ours*—that God who has not given up his rights in them when he has placed them by his providence partially under our control and protection—that God who will hold them as well as us accountable for not yielding him the honor and obedience which he claims as his due. Since it is *their first* and *great duty* to serve their Lord, we are to remember that so far as we have power over them, it is *our first duty to them* to induce them to engage in this work and to aid them in its proper and full performance.

3. *It is the duty of a master to see to the religious improvement of his servants, not only by furnishing them with all the means of instruction, but by using all diligence in inducing them to avail themselves of those means.* We are not to think that our work is done, on this point, when we merely permit our servants to enjoy the means of grace. The moralist and the christian only attempts to defend the practice of holding human beings in bondage, on the ground that they are incompetent to govern themselves and manage their own interests successfully. If this principle warrants us in keeping them under control, it at the same time binds us to exercise our power to restrain them from

evil and lead them to happiness and heaven. If they need our guardianship, and we exercise authority over them, we are under an obligation of the same kind towards them, which we recognise ourselves as placed under towards our children. Our children are subject to our control because their ignorance and immaturity of powers disqualify them for self government. If a parent should regard his authority simply as a source of advantage to himself, and should not use it for promoting the best interests of his child, he would be reprobated by man and condemned and punished by God. Guilt of the same kind, though somewhat less in degree, is incurred by the master who fails to use his power to promote the highest interests of his servants. If you use this power to secure their services to yourself, and do not use it to secure their services to God, you fail in your duty to God, who in his providence has placed these beings under your guardianship, that they might be trained up to glorify him. If an earthly parent had apprenticed his child to you, that he might be qualified for discharging, hereafter the duties of life with ability and honor, would you not expect his displeasure, if he should discover that his son had been worked exclusively for your own benefit, while you had neglected to give him that instruction, and train him to those habits, which alone would fit him for the station which his father had designed him to occupy? Must we not then expect the displeasure of God, if we shall be found neglecting to impart to his children, whom he has placed under our control, those benefits which he designed them to receive from their connection with us? The design of God in placing them in their present condition is *not our gain*, but *their good and God's glory*. If we are permitted by him to use their services, it is as a compensation for the pains and trouble which we endure in training them for glory, honor and immortality. Thus in neglecting their religious improvement, we greviously violate our obligations towards the Great Jehovah, who has placed a portion of his immortal children under our guardianship. We are guilty, too, towards these our brethren, for if the interests of their souls are a matter of indifference to us, or of but slight and transient concern, we fail to act towards them on the golden rule, that we should "do to others as we would that they should do unto us," and they must probably perish by our neglect.

The duty of attending to the religious improvement of our servants comprises among others two important particulars—*teaching and encouraging them to read God's word, and inducing them to attend his worship.* Many have avowed the doctrine that it is

t right to teach servants to read the Bible—and in some of States their instruction is prohibited by law. Our posterity doubtless wonder how so monstrous a doctrine could prevail to any great extent in a christian land; and how good men could ever delude themselves into the belief that such a doctrine was consistent with the first principles of that gospel which is sent to the bond as well as the free, and which requires all who receive it to impart a knowledge of it to the utmost of their ability to all who have it not.

To expose the falsity of this doctrine and its pernicious consequences, so fully and thoroughly as to ensure its universal condemnation, would, perhaps, require more time than the limits of our discourse will allow. But for its refutation in theeyes of all intelligent and reflecting men, nothing more, as we conceive, is needed, than that their attention should be directed to the two false assumptions on which this doctrine rests. The first assumption is, that *our system of servitude is inconsistent with even such a degree of intelligence on the part of servants as will enable them to read the Bible.* Why are slaves to be prohibited from learning to read? the answer is, because such instruction will unfit them for remaining in bondage. Now if this assumption were true, it would be the most powerful argument that has ever been urged against the system—for what pious or even philanthropic heart could countenance, for a moment, the existence of a system, whose existence depended on excluding its subjects forever from obeying the divine command to "search the scriptures," in which alone we "have eternal life?" The second false assumption on which must be rested the exclusion of servants from learning to read is, that, *for the sake of perpetuating a system which we imagine to be gainful, we have a right to keep a whole race of our fellow men in such a state of degredation as to debar them from all direct access to God's holy word, and thus fearfully multiply the chances of their eternal perdition.* If we have no such right they must be allowed to read. But can any christian imagine that we have such a right. If so he must believe that for an increase of gain we might rightfully increase still more their chances of perdition, and that to secure a very large amount we would be justified in *ensuring* the destruction of their souls. But it is not necessary, in addressing *you,* that I should occupy time in showing that all human beings ought to be *permitted* to read God's word. No iniquitous or Heaven-insulting laws have ever been passed among us, making it penal to teach any of God's creatures to read the messages which He himself has sent to them.

We have not so far imitated the Pope of Rome as to make the Bible a sealed book to those who are under our authority. Were a law of this kind in existence, we should feel bound to regard it just as far as we would a law forbidding us to feed the hungry or clothe the naked. Is there aught more valuable to any one of us as an immortal being than to be able to read the divine oracles? Can you, then, think, (I appeal to the conscience of every christian,) that you are obeying the precept of our text, that you are giving to your servants what is "just and equal," while you are taking no measures to enable them to share in a privilege of such priceless value? If the christian of old, in the days of heathen persecution, would rather suffer martyrdom than deliver up his copy of the Bible, can we imagine that we possess the christian spirit, when we are unwilling to make exertions that those under our care may have the fullest means of acquainting themselves with its life giving truths? What would you think, and how would you feel, if you were yourself debarred from all personal resort to that living fountain of truth which God has opened in the Bible for the healing and refreshment of the soul—if you were permitted to drink of the water of life only as others might find leasure and inclination to hand you an occasional sip? God's word is next to God's Son, and God's spirit, the most precious gift which divine mercy ever bestowed on man, and shall we not aid those whom God has placed under our care, and for whose salvation we are in a great measure responsible, to secure to themselves its invaluable influences? Shall we suffer those who dwell in our houses and labor in our fields, to remain incapable of reading for themselves that truth by which the Savior prayed that the Father would sanctify his people?

Again, *a master cannot discharge his duties to his servants unless he uses faithful and diligent efforts to secure their attendance upon the preaching of the gospel.* The preaching of the gospel is one of God's appointed means of grace, and a means of great value. Yet many christian masters take no pains to induce their servants to attend regularly upon the house of God. They train up their children to frequent the sanctuary—but the presence of their servants they do not require. Is it not the duty of the bond as well as the free to attend the ordinances of God? And is it not the master's business to see that his domestics perform all their duties—not merely the duties which they owe to him, but those which they owe to God? We are not required to control the hearts of our servants, for this is beyond our power

—but their attendance upon the means of grace, like the attendance of our children, could be procured by proper exertion, and we ought to secure it. Does it not look strangely inconsistent, that we can easily secure their attendance during six days of the week, on *our* work, but find it impossible to secure their attendance upon *God's* work on the seventh? They are certainly not more averse to hearing a sermon than to digging or ploughing —if, then, they perform the latter and neglect the former, is it not owing to the different estimate we teach them to place on these duties? We *manifest displeasure* at their neglect of *our interests—the neglect of God's service we wink at.*

Further, it is the duty of a master to *assemble his servants with the rest of the household for family worship.* Those servants who live apart from the masters household should be encouraged to worship God, daily in their own houses—the domestic servants ought to unite in the family devotions. Every man is constituted by God prophet or teacher, as well as king or ruler, in his own household—is regarded as the superior in wisdom as well as authority—this position he holds that he may train his children and servants to fear and serve God. A man cannot expect the blessing of God upon his family, unless he endeavors to make it a family that calls daily upon God's name. It was the testimony which God gave to Abraham, when assigning the reason why he would bless him, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him and they shall keep the way of the Lord, and do justice and judgment." Here is an example held out by God for the imitation of all masters.—Many persons justify slavery by pleading the example of Abraham. But they consider not that it was an inestimable privilege to belong to the family of Abraham. Do they imitate him in those points of conduct which *sanctified his mastership*, and which drew around him a body of faithful servants whom he could arm to repel the assaults of an invading foe?

Our object, at present, is not to give minute directions, to aid one who is disposed to discharge the religious duties of a master; but simply to show what those duties are. We cannot, then, turn aside to answer the question, "how shall we most surely and easily secure the attention of our servants to the bible, and to the public and private exercises of divine worship? One thing, however, is certain, that no man will succeed in any good work, who does not direct his mind diligently to the discovery of the means of success, and then use them with patience and perseverance.

4. Masters should *watch over the moral character of their servants, and restrain them from all conduct offensive to God.* Gross sins against God are tolerated in their servants by many masters, who will permit no practises hurtful to their own self-interest Yet it is clearly our duty to show disapprobation of conduct which we reprehend or punish in *proportion not to its injurious effects upon our personal interests, but to its criminality or moral turpitude.* And we are certainly not discharging the obligations to our servants which our position and superior intelligence impose on us, when we teach them to regard trivial offences against ourselves as of greater magnitude and deserving of severer reprobation, than gross violations of God's most important commandments. By acting thus we pervert their views of duty and responsibility, and give them, as far as lies in our power, a false standard of morality. We cannot expect them to be conscientious and upright, unless we train them to regard the divine law, and unless we show by our treatment of them that we expect and require them to respect its precepts.

To form and preserve correct moral feelings and conduct in them, it is not merely requisite that we should restrain them from vices and encourage them to virtue by proper rewards and punishments, but we should, as far as practicable keep them from corrupting associates, and set before them a godly example. In vain we may exhort them to do right, if they *see us* do wrong. If they see us honest, conscientious, kind and forbearing, a strong influence will be exerted upon them to produce virtues resembling those which they see in us—if, on the other hand the master is seen to be grasping and unscrupulous, the servant will imitate his selfish example, disregarding, as far as he can do so with impunity, his master's interest, and seeking only his own ease.

5. Masters are *bound to exercise patience towards the faults and infirmities of their servants.* Proper efforts will do much towards remedying the manifold imperfections of servants—but much will remain irremmediable. Patience, then, becomes an important duty in our intercourse with them—a duty in which we often lamentably fail. Permit me to suggest a few considerations, which, duly weighed, would satisfy us all that we should exercise, in our dealings with them, a degree of patience far beyond what we usually exhibit.—1st. We are ourselves very far from perfection—and is it reasonable to expect our servants to be better than ourselves? We need the forbearance and indulgence of our fellow men towards our own weaknesses and frailties,

and should we not grant to others what we claim largely for ourselves? And how poorly and despicably do we serve God, who has far stronger claims on our services than we have on those of our fellow men. Ought we not to exercise towards our servants something like that patience which our heavenly master is daily exercising towards us, who fail in our duty with so much stronger motives inducing us to fulfil it? 2d. The indulgence of impatience and ill-humor effect no useful purpose. All experience teaches that those who are fretful, dissatisfied, and faultfinding are not as well served as those who are even-tempered, kind and forbearing. 3. The indulgence of these feelings effectually destroys our own peace. Just so far as we permit ourselves to be irritated and vexed, we permit ourselves to be made wretched—and surely it is most unwise to indulge in any disposition which will place our happiness completely at the mercy of our dependents. Many persons thus become the victims of the faults of their servants. 4. The comfort of all around us is impaired by our yielding to these feelings. Solomon strongly expresses the annoyance produced by an impatient and fault-finding temper, when he says "it is better to dwell in the corner of a housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house." Females are more liable to this evil than men, not from any peculiar weakness of character or infirmity of mind, but from their more constant intercourse with their servants, and chiefly from the nature of the domestic employments which they superintend, involving as they do, a great variety of minute and disconnected operations, some of which are almost certain to be overlooked or slightingly performed by careless servants, while none of them can be neglected without detriment to the household and consequent dissatisfaction to her who is responsible for its welfare. 5. Impatience and fretfulness defeat their own object. Frequent chidings not only wear away the sensibilities of a servant and render him callous to all rebuke —but they excite a spirit of defiance and a disposition to annoy. 6. The scriptures expressly forbid the indulgence of impatient, harsh, and fretful feelings towards our servants—"and ye masters do the same things unto them, *forbearing threatening*, knowing that your master also is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him."—(Eph. 6. 9.) Here while masters are taught to do for their servants the "same things" which the servants had been in the preceding verses enjoined to do unto the masters, (that is to do them all the good they can, remembering the Lord regards it as done to him,) they are expressly prohibited from harsh, tyrannical and irritating language. Solomon also advises us not

to pry curiously into all the misdemeanors of which servants may be guilty, but sometimes wisely to pass as if unheeded what, if noticed, would require animadversion. "Take no heed unto all words that are spoken, lest thou hear thy servants curse thee, (i. e. speak ill of thee) for oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others."—Ecclesiastes, 7, 21.

But it is not sufficient for us to bear patiently with the faults of servants, and refrain from habitual harshness, it is, further, 6th: A MASTER'S DUTY TO TREAT HIS SERVANTS WITH POSITIVE KINDNESS. Every servant is one of those 'neighbors' whose proper treatment is exemplified by our Savior's narrative of the conduct of the good Samaritan towards the wounded Jew—he is one of those "neighbors," our treatment of whom must be regulated by that comprehensive law of God, which enjoins us to "love thy neighbor as thyself." He is, then, a being whose interests we are bound to regard, whose woes we must seek to alleviate, whose joys we must strive to increase. They constitute, too, that class of our neighbors who have the most strong claim upon our kindness; for their lot is peculiarly hard. How many are the privileges and enjoyments bestowed by God in his providence upon us, yet withheld from them! How many strong motives do we possess to incite us to good and withhold us from evil, which they do not enjoy!—and how many and precious means of improvement and usefulness have been granted to us and denied to them! Ought not the consideration of the difference of our allotments to move our sympathies and draw forth our kindness? They are God's unfortunate children, whom he has placed under our special care, that by our kindness we might mitigate the severities of their lot and sweeten their existence. The chief motive which should influence us to deal kindly with them is, "for Christ's sake."—Regard for duty, respect for God's command, gratitude to our Savior, who interests himself for them as a part of his redeemed people, all these should combine to form the great principle which should govern our conduct towards them. But there is an inferior motive worth considering, which may also operate to induce us to treat them kindly—it *is to our own interest to do so.* Kindness draws forth such services as harshness can never exact. Servants are human beings, just like ourselves, and we know that we serve those most faithfully and heartily who treat us best. Persons often complain of ingratitude—their kindnesses are not appreciated nor repaid, and especially by servants. While there is some foundation for this complaint, still it

is a general law of human nature that kindness produces a return of affection and service—and a continued course of good treatment will work a beneficial effect upon almost every disposition. When servants feel that their master's conduct towards them is simply governed by self interest, and that no real desire for their welfare animates him, they naturally feel that their interests are opposed to his, and seek their own at the expense of his. Even his favors they suspect of selfishness, and feel that no gratitude is due for them. But let them be satisfied, from his course, that he really desires their happiness, and the happy effect will soon be visible in their labors. On this important point we might enlarge would time permit, and illustrate it by a mass of facts. But we can only notice a mistake which often prevents, in a great degree, the effect of a master's benevolent doings. There are some who propose all the favors, which they intend to confer, as *compensations for services to be rendered.* If the servant perform this or that piece of work well, he is to receive such a reward. To some extent this plan is good—it affords to the servant a stimulus, and secures the quick and faithful discharge of his duty. But favors thus received are often regarded as compensations bargained for and fairly and fully earned—servants do not feel that these are *gratuitous kindnesses*—they feel that their master has been repaid. It is well, therefore, to bestow favors that are unpromised and unexpected—they are thus felt to be gratuitous, and are consequently regarded as proofs of good will. Another happy effect of sometimes rewarding their services when there has been no promise given, is that they are thus made to feel that their conduct is not unnoticed, or unappreciated, even when no peculiar motives are presented to stimulate their exertions.

If we would treat our servants aright, we must not only *act* kindly but *speak* kindly. Some persons, most unfortunately, contract a tone and manner which prevent their real kindness from being seen and felt. We all recognize the the power of an affectionate and pleasant voice. Our looks and tones are the great channels by which our feelings are conveyed to the minds of our fellow men, servants as well as equals. Kind words are often a cheap means of winning services which no money could buy. The silver tones of a kind voice seldom fail to reach the heart, and, if united with patience and perseverance, to secure cheerful and prompt obedience.

7th: IT IS A MASTER'S DUTY TO GIVE TO HIS SERVANTS A REASONABLE AND FAIR COMPENSATION FOR THEIR LABOR. "Give

unto your servants that which is just and equal." It was a beautiful provision in the law of Moses, which forbade the Jew from muzzling his ox while it was tramping out the grain. Even the dumb beast was not to be tantalized with seeing the fruits of his labor appropriated and carried away by others, while he was hungering for his share. He was not to go unrewarded, while others were fattening on his toils. The man, then, who lives by the sweat of his fellow creature's brow, ought not to grudge him a full share of the products of his own labor. And we are to remember that what is "just and equal to a brute is not "just and equal" to a human being. If a master furnishes provender, shelter and litter, sufficient for a beast, and does not overwork him, he performs all that duty and humanity require. But surely more than these are due to the human being who toils for us. He should share with us, not merely in the bare necessaries, but the comforts of life.

8th. The CORRECTION OF SERVANTS WHEN THEY DO AMISS IS PART OF THE DUTY OF A MASTER. While the infliction of punishment is always more or less painful to every feeling mind, we are taught by divine authority, that it is a salutary and often necessary means of preventing evil deeds, as well as of counteracting the acts of such deeds after they have been perpetrated. The good effects of punishment are, however, often destroyed by an impropriety in the mode of its administration. It loses a great portion of its beneficial influence, unless it is accompanied with the impression on the mind of the sufferer, that it is inflicted from a sense of duty. Many persons will punish only when their anger has risen so high as to overcome their natural repugnance to inflicting pain upon a fellow being—and then their conduct wears to the sufferer, the appearance not of discharging a duty, but of merely gratifying a vindictive feeling. While correction of every kind ought to be attended with a clear exhibition of displeasure and moral abhorrence, proportioned to the nature of the offence, it ought never to be administered in passion. Admonitions, rebukes, and personal chastisement produce a much better effect, both on children and servants, when inflicted with calmness. Persons often urge that they cannot punish coolly and calmly. This is a mistake—they *can* do it, and it is *their duty* to do it. It is as much the duty of the head of a family to administer justice in his household, according to the laws he has established, as it is the duty of a magistrate to execute the laws in a Commonwealth. And would it not be considered as an unpardonable weakness in a magistrate, to plead

an incapacity for punishing a criminal until he had become excited by passion? We should remember that no one can be successful in making others do *their* duty, who first does not do *his own* duty—no one can hope to govern others, who cannot govern himself. How can we expect that God will sanction and bless correction, unless it is administered in a spirit that he approves? Our correction of every sort ought to be just, but not vindictive, effectual but not cruel.

9th. MASTERS SHOULD ENFORCE UPON THEIR SERVANTS THE DUTY OF RESPECTING THE RITE OF MARRIAGE. Although the celebration of this rite, by our servants, has, according to the laws of the land, no legal effect, its neglect is followed by the most pernicious moral consequences. We should absolutely prohibit them from forming those irregular and temporary unions, which are alike opposed to the commandments of God and to the decency of civilized life. Even the lowest barbarian has some form or ceremony by which he gives a moral sanction to the union of the sexes—how then can we tolerate these unsanctioned, unconsecrated connections between persons living in christian families, and under the control of christian guardians? How can we inculcate integrity, faithfulness, and the various christian virtues, upon those whom we permit to live in the open and shameless violation of one of the fundamental laws of Jehovah? And how can we expect to cultivate in them a regard for character, when we permit them to live in a condition which all decent society views with contempt and abhorrence? To convince you of the master's duty on this subject it is surely not necessary that we should portray the brutalizing effects of a system of licentiousness, and prove the necessity of the marriage rite—it is enough for us to direct your attention to the fact that, if servants are not prohibited from trampling upon the rite which God has instituted as one of the great preservatives of human virture, he will hold as responsible, not the ignorant servants merely, but the more intelligent masters, who might have controlled them. By what plea can men defend or justify their power over their fellow men, unless they use it to restrain them from vice?

10th. THE APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLE, "GIVE UNTO YOUR SERVANTS THAT WHICH IS JUST AND EQUAL," WILL TEACH EVERY MASTER HIS DUTY IN RELATION TO THE SALE OF HIS SERVANTS. The law of Mohammed more just and humane, in this respect, than the codes of many of our States, punishes a crime committed by a slave with half the penalty inflicted on a freeman for the same offence; because the slave's inferiority in knowledge and motive

to restrain him from crime lessens his responsibility. But our laws often punish the crimes of slaves with a severity altogether *disproportionate to their enormity*, and our moral sense revolts at the idea of permitting their enforcement. In such cases the sale of a slave with a view to his transportation is clearly a duty, as he is thus saved from unjust suffering, while, at the same time, he receives a punishment proportioned to his offence. There are other cases in which the sale of a servant is "just and equal," —as when his perversity and misconduct defy our faithful efforts for his reformation, and make it evident that his continuance under our care will be deleterirous in its influence upon his fellow servants, detrimental to our own comfort, and productive of no good to himself. But it is clearly a violation of the principle which God lays down for the government of our conduct towards them, when we sell them for the purpose of gain, without regard to their welfare. Can we imagine that then we are "*giving them that which is just and equal*"—that we are *doing to them as we would that they should do unto us?* The criminality of this conduct rises to its highest pitch, in those cases in which domestic ties are rent asunder by the ruthless hand of the master bent upon gain: A man may stop his ears to the agonizing cry of the wife rudely forced away from her husband and separated forever, he may refuse to hear the wailing of the mother for her children torn from her—but there is a voice to which he must one day listen, the voice of the Eternal pronouncing judgment upon him, for his trampling upon the rights of humanity and treating his fellow men as if they were beasts of the field.

Such is a delineation of a master's duty. The outline might be profitably filled up, had time permitted by many additional proofs, illustrations and minute specifications; but every man for a *full knowledge of his duty* must depend in a great degree on the application by his own understanding, aided by an honest conscience, of the great principles of rectitude to his own peculiar circumstances. You can scarcely fail to arrive at truth, if in points of enquiry as to duty not specifically covered by these directions, you shall honestly examine what the great rule of "just and equal" would require.

Many may now, perhaps, be disposed to say, "If the case of the master be so with his servants, it is not good to have servants." This is precisely similar to what the Jews said to our Savior, when he explained to them the nature and duties of the marriage relation. "If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry." It would not, then, be surprising, if, when

we represented, fairly and correctly a master's duties, many should regard it as assigning to him a hard lot. The Jews had a mistaken view of the nature of marriage, just as many among us have a mastaken view of the nature of servitude. Marriage according to their conception of it was mainly designed for the convenience and comfort of the man alone—and the laws and duties of married life they deduced from this erroneous principle. So now many among us think that God has sanctioned the relation of master and servant, simply and mainly for the benefit of the master—and from this erroneous principle they deduce their ideas of a master's duties. But "God is no respecter of persons"—in his sightthe servant is as precious as the master; and this relation can have God's sanction only so far as it is designed for the mutual good of master and servant. The master is as much bound to promote the happiness of the servant as the servant is bound to promote that of the master. This is the true principle, and on this we should act, discharging to our servants all the duties which flow from it. It is a great mistake, too, to imagine that we would be gainers, even for this world, by disregarding this principle and neglecting our duties. We see how erroneous was the judgment of the Jews when they objected to the doctrine of the Savior on marriage, that it rendered the condition of the man so intolerable, that he had better not marry. We recognise the Savior's doctrine as *true*, and *act upon it*, no longer granting to man the right to divorce his wife at pleasure, no longer regarding woman as the mere instrument of man's gratification and the slave of his caprices—*and what has been the consequence?* Is the husband's condition *less happy* than it was among the Jews? So far is this from being true, that *our domestic comfort is greatly increased.* By regarding and treating woman as God intended that she should be regarded and treated, she has become a more refined, intelligent, and virtuous companion and helpmeet to man. And even thus, regarding and treating our servants as fellow beings, whose interests we are bound to promote as our own, will make them more intelligent, more active, more capable, more cheerful, more faithful, more conscientious, and more devoted assistants to us in all the labors in which we employ them. Besides the reward of well-doing, which we shall receive in the pleasing consciousness that we are improving the condition and character of our rational and immortal fellow beings, who are to stand with us before the same judgment seat, we shall receive *an additional reward* in the increased satisfac-

tion of our intercourse with them and the increased value of their services.

It may, again be objected, that if this representation of our duties is correct, then all of us have been to some degree deficient in their discharge. This objection, so far from disproving the correctness of our representation, serves rather to confirm it. If I so explained your duties either to God or your neighbor, that any one of you could say with truth, "all this I have done," I would be sure that I had taught you what was false. But our imperfections should neither hinder us from acknowledging our duty, nor operate as an excuse for neglecting it. While we honestly and conscientiously recognise all our duties to our servants, this recognition should humble us under a sense of our past deficiencies, and stimulate us to greater future diligence.

If you thus act, great will be your reward in heaven. Your servants will be something more to you than a *source of profit in this world*, they will become a source of *blessedness* to you in the *world to come*. You are God's trustees, to whom, in his providence, he commits these souls for their temporal and eternal good. Will you exercise this *trusteeship* faithfully, and receive the promised remuneration? Or, claiming them as *absolutely yours*, will you *usurp* an *authority never granted you by God*, and meet his dread displeasure? Remember that *very soon* you must depart from earth, and stand before that awful tribunal where the slave is equal with his master, and where both alike must receive their doom from a righteous Judge. "Masters give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a master in heaven."

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